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## ABRAHAM LINCOLN,—A STUDY IN ETHICS.

To such as smile at the thought of inviting Ethics and Politics and Theology to touch elbows within the narrow bounds of a single public address it is recommended to recall the vision of Witte and Roosevelt and Komura, standing at an identical moment, not merely between the arms of a single bay, nor even upon the deck of a single ship, but within the focus of a single lens. That picture is as suggestive as it is rare. The central figure, towards whom the other two have traversed opposite hemispheres, is an American, a man for the hour. What man may dare he undertakes; though whether he is following or outpacing Providence may not as yet be altogether clear. In any case there opens a new era in world diplomacy. And a seeing eye sees other forms and forces there. And these other aids are not the deck and gunnery of a modern battleship. No, the footing and reinforcement which steadied and girded the towering achievements of our gallant President were provided by the trained hand and eye of another man for the hour. The world had been made ready for that scene upon the Mayflower by learning that the proposition of even, open justice among all nations may be set beyond the reach of all slander and disrespect, if only offered with the God-like candor and childlike modesty of our lamented Secretary Hay.

Nor was John Hay an accident. He had a finished training. The inmost true origin of his original, upright statesmanship is easy to find and understand. As a lad his life fell in with Lincoln. His youth and thoughtful early manhood all lay within the shadow of that majesty. The life and lot, the heart and thought, the toil and sacrifice of Lincoln were the seed that yielded in the statesmanship of John Hay a hundred fold. In that Mayflower scene Hay stands back of Roosevelt; and Lincoln overshadows Hay. In many another modern council chamber that gaunt form towers behind, laying upon the ripening decision the mighty pressure of his gentle hand. Lincoln is to-day in the field of politics a moral sovereign. His features well deserve unveiling again.

In approaching this study one phase of Lincoln's life compels

our first attention. This is the question of his education, of his outfit intellectually. What was the measure of his mind? Had he any proper scholarship? Were his mental powers able to hold up a spreading, lasting, brightening influence and fame? What was the girth of his knowledge? Where ran the roots of his wisdom? Had he a mobile mind? Was his thinking accurate? Had he any axioms? Was his reasoning coherent, logical? Could he be called in any proper sense a political philosopher? Was his statesmanship a broad, well-poised and stable art, able to bear the light and stand the test of high and ripened scholarship? Or was Lincoln only a plain, untutored man, whose ignorance and mental incapacity need our amplest charity, as our ampler learning submits his labors to a close research?

One thing is sure. Enduring power in any realm must be based in truth. Error, ignorance—no better than falsehood and dark guile—can never survive the light. Truth is pitiless everywhere, not least in the realm of Ethics. If Lincoln's moral influence is to stand and rule, it must be possible to prove him not alone a moralist, but a sage.

Touching this factor in his life, Lincoln, always modest as a child, always spoke in humble phrase. "Education defective"—was his brief entry when filling out a memorandum at the age of 49. A year later in a fuller statement of his life, speaking of the "wild region" where he "grew up" he says:—"There were some schools. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course when I came of age, I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all. I have not been to school since (this at the age of 50). The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity."

This is painfully explicit, though also painfully brief. Just when and just how he made his "little advance" it is none too easy to say. At about the age of 22 he found by accident a copy of Blackstone. We have two glimpses of him immersed in this. From the age of 25 to 30 years he sat for three successive terms in the Legislature of Illinois. Then he says he studied law. This carried him to 1839. From then to 1854, especially from 1848, he practiced law. Here is for this study the obscure period in his life. As to his studies we can only guess.



But the man who emerged in 1854 stood full-grown—a trained and furnished intellect, an athlete in logic, a finished orator, a statesman of the foremost grade. Here he showed himself. Those preceding years could not have been idle. They must have been struggling, seasoning, ripening years. But all was undisclosed. As he says, “He kept still.” His outburst in 1854 was an immense surprise. From then until 1860 the demonstrations of his intellectual strength were amazing. Then, if never before, he proved himself a student. His mind showed its store and power.

The problem that aroused him was the Nebraska Bill. This Bill uncovered a conspiracy, as he thought, to fix slavery in honor everywhere and forever. This opened into a mighty study—the relation of slavery to the Constitution. Into the depths and reaches and meanings and issues of that problem he delved untiringly, insistently, historically, exhaustively—until one is compelled to say, not merely here is true scholarship, but here scholarship has become heroic. This is the period—1854-1860—in which to study and test the very fiber of Lincoln’s mind, as a reasoning investigating instrument embattling with a towering and intricate theme. Here one can make any test to which the action and outcome of student life can anywhere be reduced. Here are true research, careful pondering, and finished published report—research that shows ideal historic sense; judgment that was never a conjecture, but a conclusion drawn out of prolonged, deliberate thought, and which years are silently stamping as unerringly correct; and a manner of announcing his findings that attains almost to the refinement of dramatic art.

In testing the action of Lincoln’s intellect in this period of six years, one is tempted to select its earliest speech. In his own words that speech was his “connected view” of “National” concerns. It seems incredible to say; but it is verily true that into that one utterance was distilled all the essence of all that Lincoln the statesman ever said or did. Let anyone read and study it with an attentive eye upon its open testimony to Lincoln’s scholarly instinct and mental force—noting its clusters of details, its range of view, its many articulations, its judicial fairness, its notable candor, its easy familiarity with pertinent facts, its ideal cautiousness, and its welded and ponderous unity. None of these tokens of a worthy intellectuality lie indistinct. They shine and witness everywhere, sure tokens of a well stocked, balanced mind.

But another utterance of this period, standing near its close, may be the classic evidence of the acuteness and virility of Lincoln's intellect. This is his speech in Cooper Institute in February, 1860 — especially the opening half.

This address opens with characteristic modesty. Its first two sentences run thus:—"The facts with which I shall deal this evening are mainly old and familiar; nor is there anything new in the use I shall make of them." But let any man mentally feel and finger all the phrases of that discourse, as one might finger and feel all the tendons and muscles of a race horse. There is not a paragraph within that earlier part but bears the polish of a perfect scholarship. Single sentences in that survey must have cost Lincoln weeks of investigation.

The text he chose was a word of Douglas about the right of our Federal Government to control slavery in the Federal Territories. The question was this:—"Does the proper division of local from Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution forbid our Federal Government to control as to slavery in our Federal Territories?" Upon this Douglas answered, "Yes, they do so forbid." And to fortify his claim he added these words:—"Our fathers, when they framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better than we." This was an appeal to history, and upon a theme involving the relation of the Union to its parts, the standing of our Territories, the meaning of the Constitution, and at the heart of the whole the moral problem of slavery.

This was a theme for a master. Lincoln took it up from the side of history. He phrases his thesis thus:—"Did our fathers, who framed the government under which we live, understand the Federal Government to be prohibited from exercising control as to slavery in the Federal Territories?" He gave his answer, "No."

For the so-called "fathers" he took the 39 men who signed the Constitution. From the thesis, as defined by Douglas, he never deviated by the breadth of a hair. His grip upon the precise dimensions of the question was almost painfully tenacious. He refused all other witnesses, "however distinguished"; and declined all attention to "any other phase" of the general question of slavery. It may be roundly said, never did any investigator better illustrate all the excellences of scholarly research. There is no doubt of this. One of the marvels of that discussion is its

scholastic note. It reads almost like a lecture syllabus. It is not so much dotted as constituted of figures and names, facts and dates. His aim was to gather from the records of those days all that any and every one of those 39 men ever said or thought or did upon that narrowly specified theme. No student of our National life ever did a finer piece of work. Let any man who inclines to discount this man's mental worth take time to ponder this one fragment of this one speech—it covers little over half a dozen pages in his works—and he will soon begin to wonder. And soon his mind will welcome that dim legend about this modest patriot “browsing,” as the word runs, in a certain period of his life, among the libraries of Illinois.

But in calling this sample of Lincoln's public speech scholastic, it must never be judged that the Cooper Institute address was dull or dry. It was athrill with life, replete with juice and light. It was a lively argument. It was a mental duel. There the great protagonist for universal liberty was poising and striking for his life. Interest in its delivery was intense, though he was facing the strongest intellects of our national metropolis. This only heightens the marvel of his living scholar's art. It was a scholar's triumph. And in its rousing culmination it is not easy to say whether it is the finished scholar or the finished orator whom we hear, when with all the certainty of a sun-clear intellect and all the ardor of a heart on fire he exclaimed, speaking of those 39 men and of his contested theme:—“I defy any man to show that any one of them ever, in his whole life, declared that in his understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. I go a step farther. I defy anyone to show that any living man in the whole world ever did, prior to the beginning of the present century (and I might almost say, prior to the beginning of the last half of the present century) declare that in his understanding any proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. To those who now so declare I give not only our fathers who framed the government under which we live, but with them all other living men within the century in which it was framed in which to search, and they shall not be able to find the evidence of a single man to agree with them.”

There spoke no demagogue—no rude, untutored man. There spoke a scholar—a man for whom no learned guild need to frame apologies. He, even he, could illustrate an almost infinite patience of research and an almost infallible precision.

And now must follow what seems still more extraordinary. This discourse in Cooper Institute, with its almost ideal demonstration of a scholar's power, may be taken as a type and sample of the man. Lincoln was a scholar by instinct, and within his field he was as a scholar a master. He seems to have had our National history by heart. This shows, not so much in his habitual reference thereto, as in the peculiar method of making such references. He must have studied the annals of our American life like an stitution. He knew just where the army fought, just what the It seems to have come to be incarnate in himself—bone of his bone. He marched with Washington. He resisted Britain. He fought the Hessians. He suffered at Trenton. He argued out our case with Jefferson. He wrote the Declaration. He framed the Constitution. He knew just where the army fought, just what the army won. He was a son of the Revolution. He counted all our years, like a mother with her first-born child. Hear the fondling note in all his mention of this nation's growing, changing years—her "160 years," her "four score and seven years," her "82 years," her "near 80 years," her "78 years," her "over 70 years," her "more than 50 years," her "28 years," her "36 years," her "less than 8 years," her "5 years ago," her "about 1 year after," her "1st century." How affectionately he itemized her life. For all our history, to its minutest scrap he had religious reverence. Lincoln was a patriot indeed. And his patriotism was intelligent. When he assumed the office of President in 1861 no man in all the land knew better wherefore he was summoned or what was then at stake. All the meaning of all our past lay solvent in his thought. He was the representative American. In him, as in no other man, our freight and stress and destiny were most exactly poised. Athens had a Socrates, and Plato deemed those two enough. America had her Lincoln fit to be Chief Magistrate, because in his red blood all the essence of her life distilled. In the hour of her deepest need he was her ablest counsellor. And he became our sanest counsellor by no happy accident. It was the outcome of Titanic toil. He searched, he proved, he welded together the elements and



unions of our civic life with all the burning eagerness and mental energy of an Augustine.

This study made Lincoln a philosopher. It is true his wisdom was political; and his politics were American. But American civic life, as pondered and digested by Lincoln, filled wide horizons and high meridians. As he examined our career three principles became the major luminaries of his thought—Freedom, Union, Justice. And these three agreed in the one supreme political postulate:—"All men are created equal." This brief phrase embodied and published the sum of Lincoln's political faith. So mightily could his thinking penetrate and unify. He was a true philosopher. He knew his task, and he knew its end. American tho' he was, he was no mere American. He searched afar. From the time of Adam to his own Decree of Freedom his patient vision searched. He scanned all ways of kings, as also all the lot and fate of people he called "plain." He probed like Plato to see what government really means. He studied for the roots of human selfishness. He watched attentively the immortal buoyancy of man's passion and resolution to be free. He traced the sinews of well-leashed syllogisms, until his logic became invincible. He trained his eye to fasten on what he called "the central idea." His thinking became fully tranquillized only when attached to things imperishable, questions that were, as he phrased it, "durable." And all this guided him to an understanding of those common traits inherent everywhere in what he specified as "human nature." This guided him to the ultimate dualism in "right" and "wrong," toward which he was always swinging his debates. And this directed his thinking always ultimately up to God. Such was the range and substance of his philosophy.

And so Lincoln came to be a prophet. He studied life. The matters he examined were in constant evolution. Forces were pressing, issues were rising all the while. These were his facts. On this he pondered. His philosophy was a discovery of a trend. And so he became a prophet. He was continually forecasting and foretelling. He was always sketching the shadows of coming events. His main onslaught upon Douglas took this form. He argued that Douglas and others were in the secret of a "conspiracy." And his great achievement in that debate may be stated as a shrewd disclosure and disruption of their design. He saw the "tendency" of events. This was his mightiest ministry—

the making plain whither movements "drift." He had an eye to spy out the "vanguard" of evils yet to come.

It was this that gave him that almost superhuman steadiness in the awful darkness and tumult of the war. He had studied the nature of man, the nature of government, the nature of our American Constitution, the nature of our unfolding history, and the nature of current party affiliations until distant issues stood clear, and no passing defeat, though repeated a hundred times, could overwhelm his will. He saw that he was facing a final test. He knew that "all coming time" was involved. He knew that "nobody would have a chance to pilot this good old ship of the Union on another voyage," if his time did not make common cause to make her safe. And all this stable hopefulness was the normal outcome of a strictly scholarly research. He won this vantage ground by his study—by downright, ideal study—study exact, exhaustive, complete. His winnings as a statesman were his earnings as a scholar. They are the harvest of his patient intellectual husbandry.

Another durable and evident demonstration of Lincoln's intellectual force is his English style. The more one peruses over Lincoln's paragraphs the more he is caught with a pleasurable sense of their refinement. They are finished, almost up to the grade of poetry. This must have been cultivated. Proof of this lies in the endless illustrations his writings show of his continual variation of phrase, while the sentiment continues the same. This comes clearest into view by a comparison of his formal State papers, such as his inaugurals and his messages to Congress, with his freer speeches, such as the Douglas debates. Lincoln's digest of our history, and of his own political policy was complete. His sway of words was as easy as his mastery of facts. Both were under constant practice. In the flux of life he was continually readjusting and restating his views. In thought and in speech alike he grew to be agile, graceful, free. Thus his English style became a beautiful, living bas-relief, molded into finished shape under the living pressure of the passing hour according to the careful unfolding of his mobile design. And so Lincoln's literary productions are one of the ornaments in the temple of art. And this too is an achievement of his intellect, an evidence of the fine energy of his mind. Grant, after visiting all the world magistrates of his time, said:—"Lincoln

impressed me as the greatest intellectual force with which I ever came in contact."

If anyone would test the caliber of Lincoln's mind, let him make a collection of the sage-like sayings that lie scattered through his works.\*

Such was Lincoln intellectually. His influence as a moralist, whatever it may have been or shall ever come to be, will never need apology from any one of us because it lacks in intellectual poise. Within his realm—the arena of American Statesmanship—one coefficient of his primacy is his athletic intellect. He had a God-like mind. He had a prophet's jealousy for Truth, and became her life-long worshiper. And so he won rare power to define, and judge and prophesy. His stature and his vesture became imperial because in him the very facts of life stand girt about with the abiding laws of thought. This fine mental energy supplies to Lincoln's influence and fame all needed light and atmosphere. The breath of life and the light of day are his. Reason was his cherished bride and he loved to walk with her beneath the open blue in a manly fellowship with Truth. And so his character became mature.

To the careful observation of that mature and manly character one phase shines constantly. This is his solid self-respect—the very core of personal nobility. Lincoln stood for a man's integrity. He was a born expounder and defender of a Bill of Rights. But a Code of Duty found in him just as hearty championship. All men had his honor. Here coiled his central impulse. That sentiment of the Declaration, "all men are created equal," was his watchword. And this was no grudging concession. It was not a mere conviction. It was an ardent passion.

When he saw that gang of twelve chained negroes on the Ohio flatboat, he says the sight was "a continual torment" to him. The thought of bondage fastened on any mortal man made him "miserable." "The condition of the negro slave in America," he said, "is scarcely less terrible to the contemplation of a free mind than that of the lost souls of the finally impenitent"—meaning as he said it, not at all their various physical discomforts or privations or even cruelties, but the dark hopelessness of their embondaged state. What roused him in 1854 were the signs he caught

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\* In illustration see selection of Maxims appended to this article.

that negro slavery in the United States was being made "perpetual." "Mammon is after him," he said, "ambition follows, philosophy follows, and the theology of the day is fast joining the cry. They have him in his prison house; they have searched his person, and left no prying instrument with him. One after another they have closed the heavy iron doors upon him; and now they have him, as it were, bolted in with a lock of a hundred keys, which can never be unlocked without the concurrence of every key. . . . And they stand musing as to what invention, in all the dominions of mind and matter, can be produced to make the impossibility of his escape more complete than it is."

This statement seems hyperbole. But Lincoln was little given to hyperbole. He was almost painfully cautious. And in this almost violent passage he has just emerged from one of his characteristic comparative historical studies into the evolution of slave conditions from the beginning. No, Lincoln was never more sober-minded or clear than in this address. What fired him was the outrage slavery visits on a man's integrity. It is bondage. It is the violent dispossession of a freeman's inborn and inalienable right to liberty. Slavery was something Lincoln did intensely hate — not for its concomitants. He knew and freely allowed that they might be, often were, congenial. He hated it for its naked self. It was "monstrously unjust." It was an invasion of human rights, the worst he could conceive — the worst form that extortion and despotism could possibly take. He felt the living at ease on any other man's forced toil to be a downright robbery, a bare-faced tyranny. "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong," he said. It assails one's self-respect. It annuls integrity. It robs God's freemen of their rights. And so out of pure respect for man he resented and resisted slavery and all oppression.

But Lincoln's jealousy to save to men their self-respect moved him not alone to free the slave. It moved him to defend the free. He knew that the enslaving of the slave imperiled the freedom of the free. Bind and doom, damn and forget the negro, said Lincoln, "and is the white man quite certain that the tyrant demon will not turn upon him too?" "This is a world of compensation," he said; "he who would be no slave must consent to have no slave." And again he said:—"Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it." And so that the white man, proud of his no-



bility, might retain his self-respect, he gave his life to the plea that slavery might be hedged about and put upon the way to disappear.

So Lincoln stood for the full integrity of every man. "All men are created equal." He loved human freedom. He did deeply admire the proposition that all government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. That free consent was what Lincoln lived to guard. He would bring all men everywhere to a clear idea of their personal integrity. And he would have all men everywhere maintain that integrity, as they would maintain life.

It was this, and nothing else that forced him into war. He defined that struggle as "essentially a people's contest." As he conceived the war it was a fight for freedom against tyranny. It was a contest for the inherent majesty of man against his unjust and artificial abasement. This was his impassioned and immutable appeal. Give to all their rights, and righteousness will be enthroned. This was his sure confidence. "Why should there not be a patient confidence," he exclaimed, "in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? If the Almighty Ruler of nations, with his eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people." On that ground of confidence in the righteousness of a nation filled with freemen invested in the equal possession of equal rights, he stood triumphantly, knowing that he was standing for "millions yet to be," for "the last best hope of earth."

This principle of personal self-respect, so simple, so rudimentary, but so sublime, so generously defended by Lincoln for all his fellow men, stood in Lincoln himself splendidly enthroned. He held it for himself. He was nature's freeman. He studied to be worthy of himself and, as he phrased it, to "keep a sense of kinship with the great God who made him." He was "Honest Abe," jealous of an unspotted name, and he watched his honor with a keen and seeing eye. He knew that a Supreme Court Justice was not a Congressman, that a Congressman was not a General, that a General was not a Cabinet officer, that a Cabinet official was not the President, and he knew that the President was neither one nor other of them all. He knew that all had several duties, that everyone had rights, that each one had his

proper place. He aimed to honor and acknowledge all of them with a due and fit respect. But he also knew the size of his own integrity as President, and as civilian. And so he could duly rebuke, while duly respecting them all.

He reminded Generals repeatedly that he, not any one of them, was Commander-in-Chief. He reminded Cabinet officials that he himself, not any member of his private council, was administrative Head. And he taught the Jurists of the land that no Jurist's judgment, though he be Chief Justice of the Court Supreme, could make sacred a decision based on error as to fact. And so he rebuked General Hooker with his sword, corrected Justice Taney in his robes, and told Seward in his chair of State, if aught was to be done by his administration, he himself should be the doer. So mightily did the gentle Lincoln defend his own integrity.

One illustration of the place of moral integrity in the field of politics calls for carefulest explanation. It is the acme of Lincoln's statesmanship. It is his conduct of the definition and defense of our national self-respect. His clarity and valor here constitute his chief glory. They shine throughout his Presidency. But no single instance will ever outrank his handling of the Fort Sumter incident in the opening weeks of his administration. During the four months between Lincoln's election and his inauguration stupendous things occurred. Under the violent stress of the question of slavery certain States, fearing that under Lincoln's oncoming administration the institution would be annulled or impaired, claimed the right to withdraw from the Union. To this end, during those four months, the honor of the Union came under grave reproach. At first it was a question, then a challenge, then defiance, then incipient insurrection, then secession fast ripening toward rebellion. National arsenals and forts and customs and mints were seized and subverted toward insurgent ends, and seven States stood seceders.

Meanwhile Lincoln, the predestined primate of our national life, was doomed to sit impotent and mute, with no more power than the humblest civilian, if even as much, to strike a blow or say a word. And so it came to pass that when Lincoln took his solemn oath to pay throughout his official life supreme respect to the Constitution of the United States, that stately symbol and bond of our national unity stood covered with disrespect and in peril of its very life.

Then Lincoln came to his full estate. He bore an unassuming mien. But his blood was up. He took the President's oath, and never was that pledge to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution more reverently or resolutely assumed. By that oath one duty stood supreme. It was for him to maintain the integrity of the Federal Republic inviolate. That was the one burden of his conscience; as he put it, the "key" to all the measures he pursued. Therein for the time being Lincoln and the Union became identified. His honor and the honor of the Republic merged. Here unveils the very altar and throne of his integrity. In his strong and sensitive soul throbbed the very pulse-beat of our national self-respect. He guarded the Nation's honor as a man would guard the honor of his bride.

And first he made the body of that honor plain. He said:—The fair outline of our national integrity shall be kept "so free from the power of ingenious sophistry that the world shall not be able to misunderstand it." And so in the fate of Sumter he set just what the Union's honor verily means naked upon the sky. He reduced it to a matter of food. The fort was closely besieged and near to surrender to insurgents from want of bread. And so it came to stand like this:—May a Nation leave its faithful garrison to famish? Must a government supply its officers at least with bread? May insurgents fire on a transport, when its sole mission is the carrying to a loyal fort the last support of life? If seceders from a Union fire upon a vessel bearing bread to Union devotees, may such seceders go unrebuked? When through want of food a trusty garrison must soon capitulate or starve, can the challenged Government retain its true integrity and remain inert?

Thus the issue under Lincoln's hand came clear. Then he acted. First he notified the seceding Governor that attempt would be made to supply Fort Sumter "with provisions only," with no increase of arms, no men, no ammunition. At that guns were fired by secession troops upon the fort. That action, as Lincoln put it, "forced" the war. For the Union "dissolution or blood" became compulsory. There national self-respect stood displayed in its lowest, plainest terms.

Then Lincoln's inner strength stood forth. He became a man of war. In that attitude his honor became elemental. His martial resolution was irreducible. The Union must be pre-

served—that was the substance of his oath—and while rebellion raged there must be war. This duty he argued down to axioms. “Continue to execute all the express provisions of our national Constitution, and the Union will endure forever.” Even in time of insurrection the Union stands unresolved. Even when States secede, they have not withdrawn. The bonds of Union are binding still. Secession is not only anarchy; it is perfidy. Government by popular vote is the ultimate political equity. “A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people.” Government of men by their own free vote, pliant and free as their free and pliant wills, shifting freely and with ease as free majorities shift—this is the best and fairest hope of man. To smite at that is to smite at equity in the very eye. To defend, and if need be die for that is to struggle and suffer for the perfect boon of full political righteousness. It was a war between ballots and bullets; so Lincoln phrased it. Are ballots the peaceful and rightful successors of bullets? When ballots have fairly and peacefully decided, can there be a successful appeal back to bullets? Or, as he put it again:—“Is there, in all republics, this inherent and fatal weakness? Must a government, of necessity, be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?”

Here his oath and his inclination became identified. Lincoln the President and Lincoln the civilian were one. That the Union should be preserved was his solemn obligation. That the Union should be preserved was also a kindling passion. If the Union could not be preserved, with its principle of government based on free and popular consent, he said in Independence Hall, “I was about to say I would rather be assassinated upon this spot.” And so, with all his heart, and with all his supreme official prestige, as though all the Nation’s honor and all the people’s hopes were embraced in him, for the eternal inviolability of the Federal bond, he closed with the rebels in war. The point at stake was honor; that honor was elemental.

And he stood just there impreguably throughout the war. He was besieged everlastingly to strike some compromise and end the havoc of the war, even though the Union’s honor might be somewhat blemished and impaired. To all such propositions he never ceased to say, and that instantly, that war would promptly



stop upon the first fair sign that the Union had a true respect in rebel hearts. But as long as rebellion held its front Lincoln stood adamant. The integrity of the Union in the supremacy of the Constitution he would not betray, though its assailants should lose their "all." He said to Seward in June of 1862 in a private note:—"I expect to maintain this contest until successful, or till I die, or am conquered, or my term expires, or Congress or the country forsake me." In this same note he said he could wish to appeal then to the country for 100,000 new troops; but he did not dare make the appeal for fear of a general panic or stampede. So firm he stood in so dark an hour. Two years later he said:—"We accepted this war for an object, a worthy object, and the war will end when that object is attained. Under God I hope it will never end until that time."

For this precisely, and alone for this—to save the honor of the Union—he decreed the freedom of the slave. That act was strictly a measure of war. He figured the probable damage of that decree to the rebels, and the probable gain to the Federals, as men figure horse power in the action of steam. Thus he projected his proclamation. And this was always his one defense. Freed slaves became Federal troops. They grew to be a substantial coefficient of the national strength. More than that, their aid became essential. As Lincoln said, that force is "by measurement more than we can lose and live." Thus the emancipation of the negro slave was an outgrowth of the onslaught upon the honor of the Union, and as such, an expression of Lincoln's sense of our national self-respect.

Here again the integrity of Lincoln the citizen and Lincoln the President stood forth in a perfect unison. When he wrote his name beneath that Decree of Freedom, it was a Presidential act. But within the President was the man, and that man was a man of honor, a man who would stay by his pledge. His promise to the slave was out. Slaves were freed. To that promise he affixed his guaranty. And again and again he pointed critics to that signature, saying:—"the promise being made, it must be kept." In that fealty he purposed to abide, though he should be forsaken by the Nation entire. "If the people should," these were his words to Congress in 1864, "by whatever mode or means, make it an executive duty to re-enslave such persons, another, and not I, must be their instrument to perform it."

Such was Lincoln's integrity, far-seeing, brave, inflexible. As a civilian he was "Honest Abe." As an official he claimed and paid a full respect. As Chief Magistrate of a mighty Nation he demonstrated to all its parts and to all the world that under the American Union justice and freedom remain forever inviolate.

But Lincoln was not all vigor. He was a marvel of forbearance. This shows in his early life—in his patient bearing the burdens and cancelling the debts of other men. But in the Presidency this trait appears majestic. It shines in that wise and masterly silence during those pre-inauguration days. It shines through that awful month of March, when Sumter stood unprovisioned and unsupported under the muzzles of Federal guns trained by insurgent hands. It shines in that short answer to Seward's insolent charge of incompetence. It shines pathetically in his strong endurance, albeit enforced, of cold-blooded, complaining neutrals throughout the North and South. Of them he said in 1862:—"The paralysis—the dead palsy—of the government in this whole struggle is, that this class of men will do nothing for the government, nothing for themselves, except demanding that the government shall not strike its open enemies, lest they be struck by accident." "I distrust the wisdom, if not the sincerity of friends who would hold my hands while my enemies stab me. This appeal of professed friends has paralyzed me more in this struggle than any other one thing." It shines when he sees captured fugitive slaves and says:—"I bite my lips and keep quiet." It shines all through a letter written in 1864, where he says:—"I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel. And yet . . . . I aver that, to this day, I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery." It shines like a meteor in his terse reply to Greeley. It shines in his cautious measurement of terms when he says in July '62:—"This government cannot much longer play a game in which it stakes all, and its enemies stake nothing." It shines in a letter of '63 running thus:—"Those comments constitute a fair specimen of what has occurred to me through life. I have endured a great deal of ridicule without much malice; and have received a great deal of kindness not quite free from ridicule. I am used to it." It shines in his letter to Gen. Meade af-

ter Gettysburg. He says:—"I am very, very grateful to you for the magnificent success . . . ; and I am sorry now to be the author of the slightest pain to you. But I was in such deep distress that I could not restrain some expression of it. I have been oppressed nearly ever since the battle of Gettysburg by what appeared to be evidences that yourself and Gen. Couch, and Gen. Smith were not seeking a collision with the enemy . . . What the evidences were, if you please, I hope to tell you at some time when we shall both feel better. . . My dear General, I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape. . . . To have closed upon him would have ended the war. As it is the war will be prolonged indefinitely. . . . As you had learned that I was dissatisfied, I have thought it best to kindly tell you why." It shines in his patience and silence under the all but intolerable behavior of Secretary Chase. It shines in his answer to friends about the hostile plots of W. H. Davis:—"Let him push emancipation, and I don't care." It shines in a like reply to a like solicitude of friends over the popularity of Grant:—"If Grant can take Richmond, let him have the Presidency." It shines in his dealing with Gen. Hooker. He says:—"I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your saying recently that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success and I will risk the dictatorship." And then he made him head of the Army of the Potomac.

This forbearance appears impressively in his patient repetition of efforts to persuade the country, all or any part, to accept the principle of compensation for emancipated slaves. He never could get it to work.

As early as Nov. 26, '61, he drafted a bill proposing this plan to the State of Delaware. In March, '62, he made it the sole topic of a message to Congress, saying:—"In full view of my great responsibility to my God and to my country, I earnestly beg the attention of Congress and the people to the subject." He won its passage by Congress with a strong majority. But it was scorned by the South. Three days later he argued for it with the editor of the *New York Times* in a private note. The next day he explained and defended the measure with a delegation of Congressmen from border States.

Four days later he figured it out like a banker in a letter to a U. S. Senator. In May he referred to it again in most impressive language in a public proclamation, ending in an appeal of transcendent elegance and force. In July he summoned again a body of border-state representatives and plead with them with cogent eager eloquence to grandly meet the grandest opportunity of an age. In the same month he addressed again a special message to Congress on this theme. In December of '62 in his annual message to Congress he argued the matter to the extent of three-eighths of the whole message, with a marvellous breadth and minuteness and fertility of thought. He incorporated it in his preliminary emancipation proclamation. And he wove its meaning into a campaign letter sent to Illinois in Aug., '63—one of the shrewdest missives his shrewd wit ever devised.

And finally on the 5th of Feb., '65—about two months before his death—after all the cost and sorrow of the war had been all but wholly paid, he drafted another minute proposal, designed for all the Southern States:—pledging \$400,000,000 in payment for slaves; pledging his honor and authority to execute the same; to call off the war, to reduce the armies to the basis of peace, to pardon all political offenses, to release all forfeited and confiscated property, and to recommend to Congress liberality in all points beyond the President's control. This his Cabinet unanimously disapproved, and he folded it away, sadly saying:—"You are all opposed to me." This was his final offer—an amazing and unparalleled instance of his readiness to bear with the South all the sacrifice of the war, and all the cost of its procuring cause, the Nation's implication in the bondage of the black. Here Lincoln's forbearance deepens into sacrifice.

Lincoln's forbearing patience shines with a peculiar radiance in his last inaugural. His soul became chastened in the war. He felt the hand of God. And so he wrote:—"The Almighty has his own purposes. Woe unto the world because of offenses. . . . If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the Providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty



scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." He said the same thing nearly a year before. He saw that God alone was ruling and overruling all. And to God he meekly bowed, as the Nation's Magistrate, to bear up his full share of the Nation's woe. "Woe to the world because of offenses." This was the divine decree, right and irreversible; and under its mighty weight Lincoln's chastened spirit, in common with all the suffering land, bowed down in voluntary, humble, reverent sacrifice. He never railed. He bore with meekness the judgments of the true and righteous Lord.

But just here Lincoln encountered a tremendous problem. Lincoln's forbearance was headed far toward forgiveness. But slavery with its resultant rebellion was no indifferent thing. It was human and political sacrilege. Hence the relentless war, a war in which compromise was impossible. But Lincoln's forbearance was surely merging into comprehension.

Here is surely a question for a sage. Stated one way, it uncovers the terrible scourge of moral retribution, the pity of it. Stated another way, it contains the problem of human meekness. Stated another way, it engulfs the mysteries of an atonement. Stated any way, it contains the moral dualism of forbearance and integrity, truth and love. Stated in terms of American politics, it involved the discord between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. By the Declaration slavery was wrong. All men are created equal. By the Constitution slavery had rights.

Here is a moral and political and social anomaly, embedded in the very foundations of our State. And Lincoln was a statesman, and a logician and a moralist. He stood for the Declaration; he stood for the Constitution; and he was logical. This led him into the moral maze of compromise. He had to go, honoring history as he did. Here he followed Henry Clay. Clay was a National paragon of compromise. He was called the "great pacificator." His method was compromise. It was under his diligent incubation that the motley brood of 1850 was

hatched. This method had Lincoln's support, not hesitant, but hearty. Clay was, as he said, his "beau ideal of a statesman." It was the honor of the Missouri Compromise that drew from Lincoln's lips one of the most powerful of all his impassioned pleas. "Restore the compromise," he says, "and what then? We thereby restore the national faith, the national confidence, the national feeling of brotherhood. We thereby reinstate the spirit of concession and compromise, that spirit which has never failed us in past perils, and which may be safely trusted for all the future. The South ought to join in doing this. The peace of the Nation is as dear to them as to us. In memories of the past and hopes of the future, they share as largely as we. It would be on their part a great act—great in its spirit, and great in its effect. It would be worth to the Nation a hundred years' purchase of peace and prosperity."

Here is a passage worth any moralist's ponderings. But the people's ears were deaf. And so came on the war. That war led Lincoln into mighty deliberations. He studied human nature, human society, human government, and the ways of God anew. He took the pattern of our social web out under the open sky and searched into it with the eye of an Aristotle.

Here Lincoln entered into the secret place of the Most High. And when he came forth, he came in the vesture of Isaiah, treading our national winepress alone. When he folded away that memorandum on Feb. 5, two months before his death, saying sadly, "You are all opposed to me," he enfolded there his heart in a final sacrifice.

But that proposition was a compromise—a call to mutual concession. But it was a compromise refined in the heart of Lincoln. It was not a trade, in which right and wrong were for the time obscured, ignored—a trade, in which advantage was the prime concern. A compromise, as Lincoln came to view it, was a sacrifice, in which both parties suffered in the stress of some necessity, because of what was wrong, in the interest of what was right. This is Lincoln's compromise. Here integrity and forbearance, self-respect and self-devotion, the Declaration and the Constitution interblend—in the mingling beam the light of neither being dimmed, in the mighty strife the life of neither being slain, in the issuing verdict the right of neither being denied. Here is in Lincoln a mighty problem mightily at rest. He could defend himself as right, and befriend his brother though

wrong, and not becloud his reason. So he could escape, as he expressed it, "playing the Pharisee." And the wonder only heightens as one goes on to say, as truthful history does, that this strange fellowship of right and wrong retained complete consistency, whether he was pleading for peace or prosecuting war. So Lincoln, the man of war, became the Nation's priest, jealous for national holiness, sympathetic unto death, giving his own life to weld in the flames of civil war a civil unison which no future strain could ever rend. So he sought to purify our flag and keep it whole. But his pleadings failed; and he was snatched away too soon.

Lincoln was a choice exemplar of humility. He never betrayed the slightest sign of an inner impulse to domineer. His instincts were with the lowly. This sprang from the core of his life. He did cordially believe that all men were created equal. He saw in our free, self-ruling land a grand, broad avenue of hope for all who, like himself, were born to poverty and toil. The one commanding struggle and ambition of his life can be stated as his purpose to keep that bright highway clear. He never forgot his own plain early lot. Indeed, he never wandered very far from its bounds. In '56 in reply to a call for a subscription to a political fund, he had to say:—"I am absolutely without money now for even household expenses." Still he made that subscription \$500 and more. In March of '60 he said:—"I could not raise \$10,000 if it would save me from the fate of John Brown. Nor have my friends, so far as I know, yet reached the point of staking any money on my chances of success. I wish I could tell you better things, but it is even so." He remembered how humble he was himself, as his father's child. That humble lad and the later President were in Lincoln's thought always one. His wording of his supreme magisterial dignity was:—"I happen, temporarily, to occupy this White House." And then he would add:—"I am a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here, as my father's child has." He knew that he came to the Presidency "without a name," "perhaps," he said, "without a reason why I should have a name." He knew that in the Presidency he had little chance to be a despot. He deemed the brevity of the Presidential term a "wise provision." So even harmful

magistrates could "harm but little at most." This he said while President himself.

This humility showed beautifully in all his handling of the Decree of Freedom. Of that stupendous act he said:—"What I did I did after a very full deliberation and under a very heavy and solemn sense of responsibility. I can only trust in God I have made no mistake." And again touching the same act he said:—"I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me."

He knew that men were not flattered by any reminder that their deeds had contravened the plans of God. But he wrought that confession into his second inaugural. And afterwards he said:—"To deny this is to deny that there is a God, governing the world. It is a truth which I thought needed to be told, and as whatever of humiliation there is in it falls most directly on myself, I thought others might afford for me to tell it."

In '59 he sent, on request, a sketch of his life, adding these words:—"Herewith is the little sketch. There is not much of it, for the reason, I suppose, that there is not much of me. If anything be made out of it, I wish it to be modest, and not to go beyond the material."

Still in that same man there loomed a genuine majesty. But it was not a hollow stateliness, like Bonaparte's. He was nearer like a little child. Lincoln was a lawyer; but a greater than a lawyer is here. He was greater than all his Admirals, greater than all his generals, greater than all his cabinet. One single bullet closed his life; he was a common mortal. But he was greater than all Dukes. Sword and sash befitted Scott. Gilt epaulets beseeemed McClellan. But Lincoln was too great to wear a decoration, too high to take a crown. The robe that would best fit him would not be out of place upon the least of us. He was a man, unadorned, undisguised. He had true humility; but within the graceful outline of his humility dwelt a mighty store of solid, undecaying worth.

Hear his beautiful and thoughtful words about raising that flag in Philadelphia in '61 on his way to his first inauguration. "Nor could I help feeling then as I have often felt, that in the whole of that proceeding I was a very humble instrument. I had not provided the flag; I had not made the arrangements for elevating it to its place; I had applied but a very small portion of even my feeble strength in raising it. In the whole trans-



action I was in the hands of the people who arranged it." Here is inwrought, unfailing, but most majestic lowliness.

Lincoln was a splendid type of stalwart dauntlessness. This trait marked all his life. He was essentially intrepid. Two instances of this stand eminent—his dash at the armor of the doughty, wily, popular, prospering Douglas; and his assumption of the Presidency. In both these cases his heroism was moral. It was due to insight. When he faced the Presidency, he was not without forebodings. The future was vast and dark. He confronted a task "greater," as he said, "than that which rested upon Washington." But he had a trained, deep-seeing eye. Reason was his inspiration. He knew the Nation could not divide; that problem he studied out on every side before he took the oath. Before ever he sent Anderson that bread he knew that Ft. Sumter was a trap in which the fingers of secession would be caught. He knew before the war began, that the rebellion could never win, though he acknowledged freely and explicitly and repeatedly the splendid valor of the South. He knew the resources from which he drew, for he studied and calculated them with a statistician's care. He knew that the Union was dear at heart to hosts that seemed at war among themselves, and that he could count ultimately upon their support. He knew that history had commended the government of the United States as beneficial toward mankind, and "reckoned" hence that outside Nations would not break in. He knew that "plain people" everywhere would approbate his aims. He noted with a narrow eye the fact that when Generals left their flag to join the South not one "common soldier" left the Union ranks. He knew that the principles for which he stood had proved wholesome by sure test. This high confidence was his from careful study of the filling ranks of volunteers. He knew no similar army in all the annals of war had ever been constituted of "volunteers." And he saw that these same teeming "volunteers" were men of skill and worth. He rose from his study of the rallying ranks and said:—"There are many single regiments whose members, one and another, possess full practical knowledge of all arts, sciences, professions, and whatever else, whether useful or elegant, that is known in the world;" and then he added:—"There is scarcely one from which there could

not be selected a President, a Cabinet, a Congress, and perhaps a Court, abundantly able to administer the government itself." Such studies made him invincible. He knew that the human heart was with him. And he never took his eye from God. He believed the equality of men lay safe in the great Creator's decree. And he reverently, deeply felt that his own firm championship of that high verity would in some way win heaven's crown. And so he never feared. His courage was like a tower—calm and strong in truth and man and God.

This poised steadfastness of Lincoln gave steadiness and poise to other men. He might fairly be called the Great Enheartener. Several of his earlier private letters were keyed to this note of inspiring fearlessness and hope in other men. This stalwart power of encouragement must have rung a trumpet blast in the famed "lost speech" of '56 when he rallied the fragments of the newly-formed Republican party from its first defeat. It rang like a clarion all through those germinal days, when the party that made him President was being assembled and organized. He was a leader of men, arousing, inspiring, courageous, unbaffled forever. Even in defeat he would say:—"I am glad I made the late race. It gave me a hearing on the great and durable question of the age. . . . And though I now sink out of view . . . I believe I have made some marks which will tell for the cause of civil liberty long after I am gone." Those "marks" were made on other men. Lincoln was a skilled engraver; he carried a steady nerve, a steady eye, a steady hand. And he kept transferring the impress of his strong confidence deep into other spirits, through all those sombre days of war. One wonders at his reliability. It never lapsed. He often stood in solitude. But he stood. He was absolutely indomitable. His upbearing strength must have been, as he himself avowed, supplied from God. Trustful, wary, tactful, studious, the volume of his fortitude was full; it did not fail, it did not even fluctuate. It would be hard to think of Lincoln leaving Washington from fear. His courage was inwrought. It lay in the very composition of his character. It was his faith in the right. It was loyalty, inwrought with confidence, become invincible.

This leads on to a study of Lincoln's kinship with eternity. Here is a nature that by its nature hath immortality. In the

Lincoln-Douglas debates Douglas was quoted as saying:—"I don't care whether slavery is voted up or voted down." In the closing speech of those debates Lincoln fastened upon that "don't care" thus:—"Any man can say that who does not see anything wrong in slavery; but no man can logically say it, who does see a wrong in it; because no man can logically say he don't care whether a wrong is voted up or voted down. No man can say you have a right to do wrong. . . . You may turn over everything in the Democratic policy from beginning to end, . . . it carefully excludes the idea that there is anything wrong in it. That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country, when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles—right and wrong—throughout the world. They are two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the divine right of kings."

Then in this same speech he ranged away from the question of the bondage of the black to the broader question of the freedom of all men everywhere. He aspired, as he expressed it, to make this land "an outlet for free white people everywhere the world over, in which Hans and Baptiste and Patrick, and all other men from all the world may find new homes and better their condition in life."

Here is the voice of an imperishable life. The fundamental postulate of Lincoln's thought was the decree and act of God creating all men equal. There Lincoln's political philosophy began. It was this that he meant primarily when he said in Independence Hall in '61:—"I have never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence." In that conviction Lincoln's political career began. In that conviction Lincoln's political career culminated.

"All men created equal." That meant equal justice, equal freedom, and a perfect union. Union in justice, union with freedom, union of all.

Such was Lincoln's creed and plea. And he knew its perpetuity. His eye was constantly on what he called "the vast future." "Hope to all the world" was his life motto. "Can this country be saved on that basis?" he exclaimed. "If it can

I will consider myself one of the happiest men in the world, if I can help to save it." Into such an aspiration he interlaced his life. And so he became immortal.

And thus in the moral majesty of the honest, patient, aspiring Lincoln—as the Hebrew Nation in the Hebrew Abraham—**this nation's moral destiny stands incorporate. Politics and Ethics are identical.** The body politic is a body personal. The State must illustrate integrity. Of this civil rectitude, equal, even justice is the root and core. A free, fair chance for every man must be its motto forevermore. When this fraternal honor fails, that is an ultimate offense. Then will fall from the hand of a righteous God some awful, righteous woe. Under the full burden and passion of that woe the Nation must humbly, patiently bow until full doom is spent. Then out of the ashes and fires of an honest penitence that Nation may arise again to a new integrity of justice, freedom, and fraternity. Such a Nation may cherish a lively hope, and illustrate immortal life. Such a Nation, continually receiving the priceless legacies of the past, and handing them down as a shining dowry to the times to come, will stand for treasures that endure—not for battleships or palatial homes; not for dress-parades or coronets; not for anything that perishes in its use; but for men, well-mannered, democratic men, men who love their kind, revere just law, abhor the domineer, believe in immortality and worship God.

Such is Lincoln—Poet, Prophet, Scholar, Sage; erect, compassionate, lowly, brave, imperishable. Gather now the essence, and the quintessence of the counsel of his lips and of his life upon the projects and the problems of our intricate and complicated time.

Will a teeming, puissant Nation stop and listen to a prophet's pleadings? Lincoln answers, Yes.

In a Republic must faith fail? Lincoln answers, No.

In a campaign of politics can conscience survive? Lincoln answers, Yes.

Must malice mark all party strife? Lincoln answers, No.

Can a compromise be stamped with equity? Lincoln answers, Yes.

Does meekness require a full manhood's full nobility? Lincoln answers, Yes. And in that answer he that hath ears will hear the echo of the Messianic sorrows.



May a primate always exemplify humility? Lincoln answers, Yes.

In politics must patience be perfected? Lincoln answers, Yes.

Can the golden rule hold good out upon the hustings? Lincoln answers, If not, I would despise myself.

Does prayer to a living God comport with statecraft? Lincoln answers, Yes.

Can this our native land, can these United States, become a Kingdom of God, the perpetual home of peace and righteousness and joy? Lincoln answers, If not, then the last, best hope of earth is lost. And I would rather die by violence.

Such is Lincoln's wisdom—golden words, tried as by fire; immortal words, born of the patience of his incorruptible hope. Here is the issue of his agony. This is the coronet of Lincoln—Lincoln the Model American, the Civilian of the World.

CLARK SMITH BEARDSLEE.

*Hartford, Conn.*

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LINCOLN'S MAXIMS.

Sage-like sayings lie scattered throughout Lincoln's utterances. They display strikingly and past all controversy the rare insight and energy and finish of his thought. Samples are appended here as a testimonial of his intellectual strength.

When the conduct of men is designed to be influenced, persuasion, kind, unassuming persuasion should ever be adopted.

The way for a young man to rise is to improve himself every way he can, never suspecting that anybody wishes to hinder him.

The leading rule for the lawyer is diligence.

Extemporaneous speaking is the lawyer's avenue to the public.

This habit of uselessly wasting time is the whole difficulty.

Free labor has the inspiration of hope.

A universal feeling, whether well or ill founded, cannot be safely disregarded.

It is kindly provided that of all those who come into the world only a small percentage are natural tyrants.

What I do say is that no man is good enough to govern another man without that other man's consent.

Repeal the Missouri Compromise, repeal all compromises, repeal the Declaration of Independence, repeal all past history, you still cannot repeal human nature.

In giving freedom to the slave we assure freedom to the free.

Public opinion, on any subject, always has a "central idea," from which all its minor thoughts radiate.

The assertion that "all men are created equal" was of no practical use in effecting our separation from Great Britain; and it was placed in the Declaration, not for that, but for future use.

The plainest print cannot be read through a gold eagle.

I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free.

All I ask for the negro is that if you do not like him, let him alone. If God gave him but little, that little let him enjoy.

"Give to him that is needy" is the Christian rule of charity; but "Take from him that is needy" is the rule of slavery.

And then, the negro being doomed, damned, and forgotten, to everlasting bondage, is the white man quite certain that the tyrant demon will not turn upon him too?

No man can logically say he don't care whether a wrong is voted up or voted down.

This is a world of compensation; and he who would be no slave must consent to have no slave.

Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it.

Taking slaves into new Territories, and buying slaves in Africa, are identical things, identical rights or identical wrongs, and the argument which establishes one will establish the other.

I say that there is room enough for us all to be free.

Douglas's popular sovereignty, as a matter of principle, simply is: "If one man would enslave another, neither that other nor any third man has a right to object."

It is a concealed assumption of Douglas's popular sovereignty that slavery is a little, harmless, indifferent thing, having no wrong in it, and no power for mischief about it.

Human action can be modified to some extent, but human nature cannot be changed.

No policy that does not rest upon philosophical public opinion can be permanently maintained.

I have never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence.

Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments.

It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination.

The Union is much older than the Constitution.

No State of its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union.

Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision of the Constitution has ever been denied.

Plainly, the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy.

A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people.

Physically speaking, we cannot separate.

The Country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it.

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world?

Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time.

Must a government, of necessity, be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?

It may be affirmed without extravagance that the free institutions we enjoy have developed the powers and improved the condition of our whole people beyond any example in the world.

This is essentially a people's contest.

It is now for us to demonstrate to the world that those who can fairly carry an election can also suppress a rebellion.

The people themselves, and not their servants, can safely reverse their own deliberate decisions.

What I object to is, that I, as President, shall expressly or impliedly seize and exercise the permanent legislative functions of the government.

I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game.

No men living are more worthy to be trusted than those who toil up from poverty—none less inclined to take or touch aught which they have not honestly earned.

What I deal with is too vast for malicious dealing.

This government cannot much longer play a game in which it stakes all, and its enemies stake nothing.

It is difficult to make a man miserable while he feels he is worthy of himself and claims kindred to the great God who made him.

God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time.

There is no line, straight or crooked, suitable for a National boundary upon which to divide.

A fair examination of history has served to authorize the belief that the past actions and influences of the United States were generally regarded as having been beneficial toward mankind. I have, therefore, reckoned upon the forbearance of nations.

Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators.

Negroes, like other people, act upon motives.

The promise, being made, must be kept.

If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong.

I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me.

The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty.

When brought to my final reckoning, may I have to answer for robbing no man of his goods; yet more tolerable even this, than for robbing one of himself, and all that was his.

It is not best to swap horses while crossing the river.

Loss of our colored force in our army is, by measurement, more than we can lose and live.

It is no pleasure to me to triumph over anyone.

The Almighty has his own purposes.

Let the friends of the government first save the government, and then administer it to their own liking.

Whoever molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces judicial decisions.

Work, work, work is the main thing.

We cannot escape history.